# Iowa's Continuous Improvement Benchmark Model

This presentation was developed by **Barb Rolston** and **John Hartwig** for the lowa Department of Education and lowa's community college based statewide adult literacy program.

#### **Presentation Goal:**

Present and discuss Iowa's Adult Basic Education Continuous Improvement Benchmark Model.



#### **Presentation Objectives:**

- Present legislative intent and National Reporting System (NRS) core indicator background information.
- Discuss the importance of benchmarks in relation to adult basic education program improvement.
- Present the purpose and characteristics of an adult basic education continuous improvement benchmark model.
- Provide an overview of lowa's continuous improvement benchmark model development.
- Present lowa's continuous Improvement benchmark model.

#### **Participation Outcomes:**

- Participants will have an understanding of how to utilize the results of NRS core indicators to develop strategies for local/state adult basic education program continuous improvement.
- Participants will have an understanding of how to apply the principles of an adult basic education continuous improvement benchmark model for local/state program improvement.
- Participants will have an understanding of how to apply the principles of an adult basic education continuous improvement benchmark model in order to project realistic benchmark attainment percentage levels.

# Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Legislative and NRS Core Sicator Background

# Legislative Intent of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act:

One of the major intents of AEFLA was to establish performance measures and benchmarks to demonstrate increased accountability. When AEFLA was reauthorized in 1998, Congress made accountability for results a central focus of the new law, setting out performance accountability requirements for States and local program that measure program effectiveness on the basis of student academic achievement and competency based outcomes.

# Goals of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act:



- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency (Workplace Literacy);
- Assist adults who are parents obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children (Family Literacy);
- Assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.

# Core Indicators Required by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act:

- Demonstrated improvement in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills;
- Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement;
- Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (GED based credential).



#### **EXHIBIT 1**

#### Goals and Core Indicators of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and NRS Core Outcome Measures

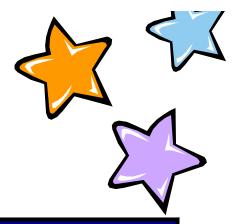


Goals of Adult Basic Education Described in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act	Core Indicators Required by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act	National Reporting System Core Outcome Measures	Number of NRS Core Indicators	
Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.	Improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language, numeracy, problemsolving, English language acquisition, other literacy skills.	•Educational gains (achieve skills to advance educational functioning level)	11	
Assist parents to obtain the	Placement in, retention in, or	•Entered employment	red employment 3	
skills necessary to be full partners in their children's	completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized	•Retained employment		
educational development.	employment or career advance- ment.	•Placement in post- secondary education or training		
Assist adults in the completion of secondary school education.	Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (GED based credential).	•Receipt of a secondary school diploma or pass GED tests.	1	

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#### **EXHIBIT 2**

## Relationship Between Instructional Programs AEFLA Educational Gains Core Indicators



Instructional Program	Educational Functioning Level	CASAS Instructional Level	CASAS Standard Score Range
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	ABE Beginning Literacy ABE Beginning Basic Education ABE Intermediate Low	Level A Level B Level B	Under 200 201 to 210 211 to 220
	ABE Intermediate High	Level C	221 to 235
Adult Secondary Education (ASE)	ASE Low	Level D	236 to 245
ESL//Citizenship	ESL Beginning ESL Beginning ESL Intermediate Low ESL Intermediate High ESL Advanced Low ESL Advanced High	Level A Level A Level B Level B Level C Level D, E	165 to 180 181 to 200 201-210 211-220 221-235 236-245

#### **EXHIBIT 3**

#### **AEFLA Follow-Up Indicators**

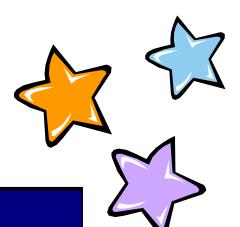


Entered Employment (Get a Job)

Retained Employment (Keep a Job)

Obtained a GED or Secondary School Diploma

**Entered Postsecondary Education or Training** 



#### Why are Benchmarks Important???

 It's the law!! The requirement to demonstrate program impact was mandated in 1993 through the Government Performance and Review Act (GPRA). GPRA required all Federal agencies to develop strategies/plans to ensure that services were delivered efficiently and in a manner that best suits client needs. GPRA also required all



Federal agencies to develop indicators of performance to demonstrate their agency's impact. This mandate resulted in the National Reporting System (NRS) for AEFLA.

- Benchmark achievement provides baseline data which can be used as a guide for local/state program improvement. An analysis of benchmark attainment patterns can be used as part of the basis for negotiated benchmark percentage projections with state/federal funding sources.
- The successful completion of benchmarks provides the potential to apply for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 federal incentive grants.

- Benchmark attainment documents and verifies the effectiveness of adult basic education programs at the local, state and national level.
- The successful completion and reporting of benchmarks effectively documents that local/state adult basic education programs are achieving the Congressional intent and purpose of AEFLA.





- Benchmark attainment can be used as the basis for reporting local/state adult education program effectiveness and accountability to decision makers and the body politic (i.e. state legislative bodies, Governors, Congress).
- Benchmark attainment can be used as the basis for documenting program effectiveness and accountability to other WIA partners and agencies.



benchmark attainment data can be used to apply for state/federal funding to support adult basic education program efforts or to initiate new literacy initiatives (i.e. Community Technology Center grants, family literacy grants, workplace literacy grants).

 An analysis of benchmark attainment patterns can be used as part of the basis for negotiated benchmark percentage projections with state/federal funding sources.

Benchmark attainment can be used to clearly demonstrate that the local/state adult basic education program is making a difference in the lives of the clientele they serve.



Purpose and **Characteristics of Adult Education** Continuous Improvement **Benchmark Model** 



#### **Purpose:**



Provide Iowa's adult basic education programs with a field based process to realistically set and achieve local/state benchmark levels for the NRS and state mandated outcome measures.

#### **Characteristics:**

- Process oriented as opposed to product oriented (e.g. model is designed to outline process approach to benchmark projections utilizing different types of product based documentation).
- Flexible, adaptable and adoptable to meet local/state program, agency or organizational unique needs.
- Practitioner based, realistic and easily understood by ABE program directors and staff.
- Comprehensive with all model component parts integrated to form the complete model.

#### Characteristics: continued

- Reflects local/state program instructional goals and desirable benchmark outcomes.
- The model is constantly evolving to incorporate updated trends, innovations, new strategies, changes in state/federal reporting requirements, etc. The model is not static nor are the principles upon which the model is based "cast in concrete".



# Development Process for Iowa's Adult Basic Education Benchmark Continuous Improvement Model:

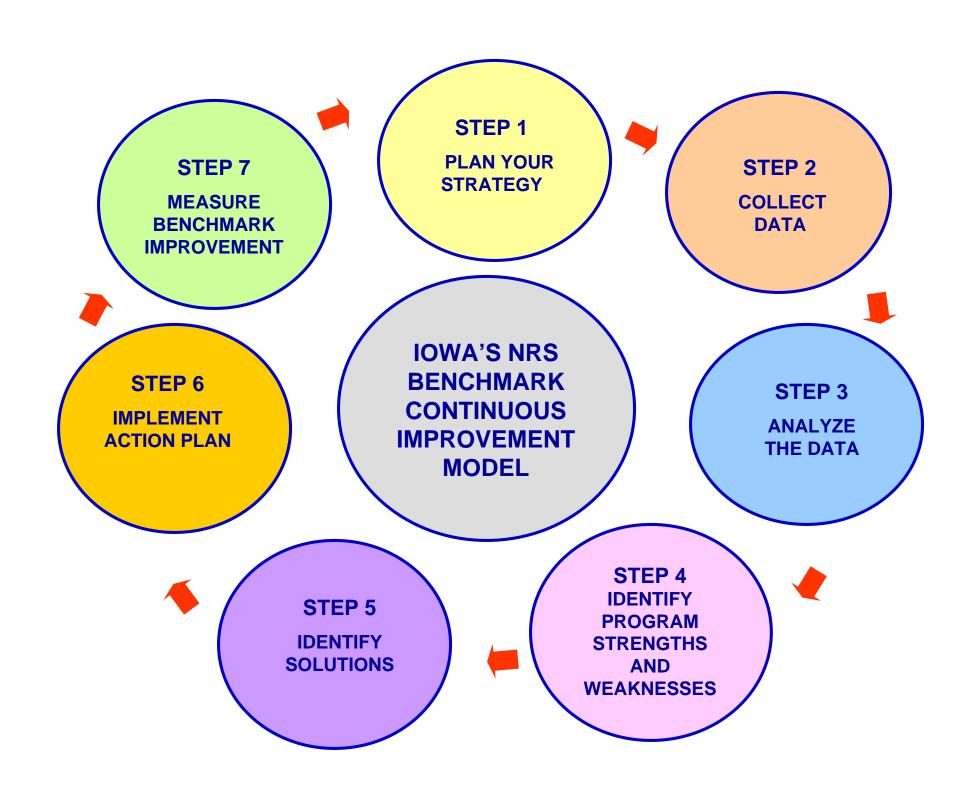
- Review of literature to determine common trends and characteristics of benchmark continuous improvement models.
- Initial draft was developed by Barb Rolston and reviewed by lowa state adult education staff to provide input.
- Second draft reviewed by local adult basic education program directors and staff to provide additional input.

# Development Process for Iowa's Adult Basic Education Benchmark Continuous Improvement Model: continued



- Third draft was reviewed by CASAS, DAEL, American Institutes for Research (AIR), and other nationally recognized experts to provide additional input.
- Fourth draft was reviewed by all parties for final review, input, and revisions.





# Step One: Plan Your Strategy



### **Step One: Plan Your Strategy**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Examine state and local ABE plan	Five Year State Plan for ABE
Identify previous benchmarks	See Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program <i>Annual Benchmark Report</i>
Identify projected benchmarks	See Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program Benchmark Projection Report
Identify state negotiated benchmarks	See Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program Benchmark Projection Report

#### **Step One: Plan Your Strategy (Cont.)**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Examine relationship between state and national benchmarks – actual and projected.	See Iowa's Annual Staff Development memorandum and revised Table 12 of Adult Basic Education State Plan for current negotiated benchmarks for any given program year.
Identify data needed.	See TOPSpro/NRS Coding Guidelines and Iowa TOPSpro Data Dictionary
Identify data collection tools and methods.	TOPSpro reports CASAS Assessments Observations Interviews
Identify and document local data collection process.	NRS/CASAS Flowchart

#### **Step One: Plan Your Strategy (Cont.)**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Seek input from staff and Participatory Planning Committee.	Instructional staff and literacy partners including agency representatives, private sector and community groups
Establish local training guidelines and timeline.	Five Year State Plan for Adult Education
Identify resources available	Five Year State Plan for Adult Education State Staff Development Plan
Identify changes to previous NRS guidelines.	State NRS staff development workshops



## **Step Two: Collect Data**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Collect demographic information needed for Federal Tables	TOPSpro Entry/Update/Test scan forms or manual entry of information
Administer pre and post CASAS assessments.	CASAS Reading and/or Math Assessments
Determine Learning Gains by agency, program, site and/or class – previous program years & present	TOPSpro Reports
Determine core outcome measures by agency, program, site and/or class.	TOPSpro Reports

#### **Step Two: Collect Data (Cont.)**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Determine number of pre/post tests administered to date by agency/site or class.	TOPSpro/NRS report
Determine number of IA Basic Skills Certificates issued by agency/site or class.	TOPSpro Certification Report
Collect qualitative data related to external factors affecting benchmark at the agency, site or class level.	Interviews, observations, staff meetings
Identify staff development opportunities and participation.	Local records



## **Step Three: Analyze Data**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Is my data accurate and reliable?	Coded per Iowa TOPSpro Data Dictionary
Do I have the most current data available?	Local data collection process in place
Determine your projected benchmarks for current year.	See Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program  Benchmark Projection Report
Identify the state negotiated benchmarks for current year.	See Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program  Benchmark Projection Report

#### **Step Three: Analyze Data (Cont.)**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Compare local benchmarks for programs, sites, classes to state and agency benchmarks in previous program year.	Run TOPSpro Federal Tables report by program, site and/or class for previous program year.
Examine number of pre/post test administered by agency/site/class or teacher to date and compare to present enrollment.	TOPSpro reports and analysis of benchmark attainment trends for previous years.
Examine qualitative data and compare to benchmark data.	Determine if staff have an understanding of benchmark process and outcomes.

#### **Step Three: Analyze Data (Cont.)**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Compare staff development and training participation to benchmark performance.	Interview staff to determine effectiveness of local and state staff development activities in relation to improved benchmark performance.
What literacy projects are currently being piloted and what is the anticipated benefit or effect on program outcomes – present and future?	Research findings from pilot projects and final project reports
Examine and compare core outcome measure for agency, program, site, and/or class and compare to previous projected results.	TOPSpro previous year reports and diagnostic reports for present status



# **Step Four: Identify Program Strengths and Weaknesses**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Identify sites/classes/ teachers that meet or exceed projected benchmarks.	Meet with staff to discuss effective instructional strategies for successful benchmark attainment.
Identify the characteristics that may influence performance for those sites/ classes or teachers that meet or exceed projected benchmarks.	Research and determine factors.  Example: Do class locations, economic issues, schedule conflicts with other agencies, or other factors affect attendance or learning?
Identify sites/classes/teachers that fall below projected benchmarks.	Meet with staff and review relevant TOPSpro reports, instructional strategies and teaching methodologies.



## **Step Five: Identify Solutions**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Identify methods for transferring program strengths to weak program areas.	Developing effective state and local staff development activities
Identify potential staff development or training opportunities.	Local and state development plans and input from staff, participatory planning committee, agencies and literacy partners

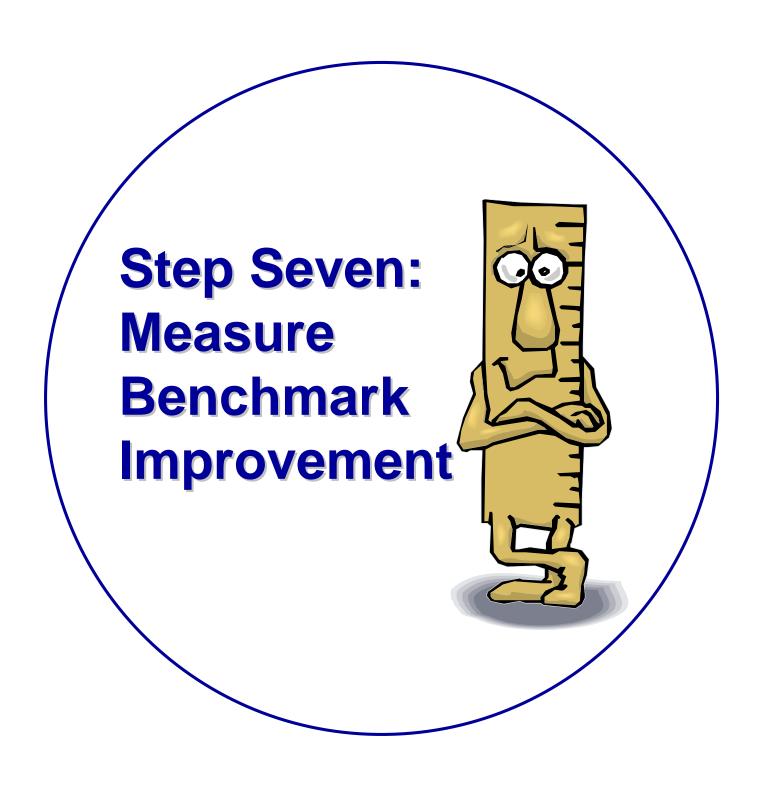
#### **Step Five: Identify Solutions (Cont.)**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
List potential solutions and implementation strategies.	Finalize implementation strategies with staff, participatory planning committee and other literacy partners.
Identify successful statewide or national pilot projects and/or research findings that can be implemented at the local level.	Various national, state and local research reports and pilot project reports.



### **Step Six: Implement Action Plan**

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Plan appropriate actions to match solutions identified.	Local program plan should include action steps and time lines for achieving the identified action steps.
Evaluate effectiveness of identified strategies and solutions.	TOPSpro reports and staff review
Disseminate promising practices.	Research findings, pilot projects



# Step Seven: Measure Benchmark Improvement

PROCESS	TOOLS/RESOURCES
Measure benchmarks after appropriate time frame.	The NRS report should be generated on a quarterly basis by local program to determine benchmark levels.
Is program improvement the result of actions implemented?	Staff input and relevant TOPSpro reports
Establish local program strategies and solutions for local benchmark improvement and/or maintenance of successfully achieved benchmarks	Local benchmark attainment should meet or exceed state benchmarks. Local benchmark projections should be within a 5 percentage point range of the state negotiated benchmarks.

REPEAT PROCESS
FOR CONTINUOUS
PROGRAM
IMPROVEMENT!



END OF IOWA'S NRS BENCHMARK CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MODEL PRESENTATION